

REMARKS

As an initial matter, applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the interview conducted on April 15, 2004. During that interview, the new independent claims 23 and 28 included in this amendment were discussed. The Examiner agreed that these new independent claims distinguish the art of record, and indicated the claims would be allowable if additional prior art searching did not uncover any references that teach the invention as now claimed. New independent claim 34 was not discussed during the interview. However, applicant believes claim 34 also distinguishes the prior art in the manner discussed with respect to claims 23 and 28.

Accordingly, by way of this preliminary amendment, claims 1-22 are canceled and claims 23-38 are added. Of the claims at issue, claims 23, 28 and 34 are in independent form. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

As discussed in the interview of April 15, 2004, no prior-art reference(s) of record teaches or suggests (alone or in combination) “wherein the first controller is programmed to transfer the first network identifier to the second controller via the fiber optic cable and not via either one of the first backplane and the second backplane” (claims 23 and 34). In addition, no prior-art reference(s) of record teaches or suggests (alone or in combination) “wherein the first controller is programmed to transfer the application program and the plurality of state variables to the second controller via the fiber optic cable” (claim 28). Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

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If there is any matter that the Examiner would like to discuss, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned representative at the telephone number set forth below.

Date: April 20, 2004

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